

## CAPTAIN TELLS OF LINDY'S FLYING DAYS IN COLORADO

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A tall, slender, gangling man with a decidedly Scandinavian cast to his youthful features, dressed in a blue serge suit that was considerably too short in the sleeves and carrying a cheap straw suitcase, stepped off a train at the Pueblo Union depot in July, 1925, and presented himself before Capt. J. B. Wray Vaughn, manager of the "Mile-Hi Flying Circus."

He was Charles A. Lindberg, shown below, then an instructor at the Robinson flying field in St. Louis. He had been sent in response to Vaughn's telegram asking for an experienced pilot for his four-plane air circus.

Vaughn, who is in Pueblo on business, told the story of his friendship with the "Lone Eagle" to a Chieftain representative Monday night.

Two days after arriving here, at Wiley, Colo., Lindy made his first flight with the "Mile-Hi Circus." Toward the end of August, the troupe flew at Rocky Ford, and still later in the season, they appeared at Pueblo. The circus, with Lindy still handling one of the machines, returned to Pueblo the following year.

Lindbergh at that time was just an ordinary pilot, no better than the average, according to Capt. Vaughn, who was in Pueblo Monday night on business. He entered the air mail service after the flying circus days and nearly a year after his last Pueblo appearance as a stunt flyer, started on his epochal flight across the Atlantic.

Lindy's job with the flying circus was to pilot one of the planes, doing all sorts of aerial acrobatics for the benefit of the spectators. These stunts included such hair-raisers as changing from one plane to another in mid-air, which at that time never failed to thrill the spectators.

Outstanding among the incidents of the flying circus was a "fast one" pulled by Lindbergh at the Rocky Ford fair about a month after he had joined the troupe. The crowd was unwilling to part with the extra 10 cents admission price to the grandstand to witness the stunt fly-

ing. To gain their interest Lindy with Capt. Vaughn aboard, took off and circled the field, after looping-the-loops and other aerial maneuvers had failed to arouse their enthusiasm.

A man's figure was seen clinging to the side of the plane as it came swinging back over the field. Directly over the grandstand, it let go and plunged earthward. A cry went up from the crowd when no parachute opened and the figure continued to hurtle toward the ground. As it struck the crowd rushed forward while hun-

dreds who had witnessed the fall from the town of Rocky Ford sped toward the fair grounds. A laugh, which soon became general, went up when it was found the figure was only a dummy.

Lindy flew Capt. Vaughn's plane in the trans-continental air races in 1925 and 1926 as the entry from Colorado.

The days of the flying circus are over, Capt. Vaughn said Monday night. People no longer will pay to see planes loop-the-loop, do the Immelmann turn, the "falling leaf" and various other stunts. No

even changing from one plane to another is sufficient to picque their interest.

"They'll pay more now to see an old gas balloon go up than to see a flying circus," Vaughn said.

Vaughn, who was formerly auditor for the old Pueblo Mercantile bank, and who is now a special representative of the bond department of the First National Life Insurance company of Denver, is something of an aviator himself.

He has been flying for 13 years and has had about 3,000 hours in the air. The average life of a flyer, he said Monday, is 970 hours. He has survived several falls, the longest being 1,330 feet, and the last 100 feet, at Greeley two years ago.

"I was too busy trying to straighten the ship out to have any other sensations," he said when asked how it felt to fall so great a distance. "Every time I fought it all the way down and was pretty lucky to be able to walk away."



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